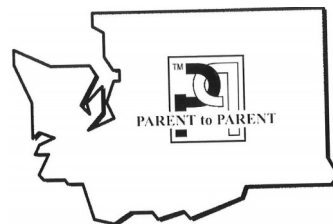


Island County Parent to Parent Newsletter

July 2021



Looking for family fun and a taste of the cowboy/
girl life? And Free? And on Whidbey?

"Day of Western Fun"

Saturday, August 14

10am-2pm



Island County Parent to Parent
Families are invited to a Day of
Western Fun at the M Bar C
Ranch in Freeland.

The M-Bar-C Ranch is a real working ranch designed especially for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families! Kids can ride horses, be cowhands, dress up in the costume, explore the western town, eat chow (free hotdog lunch), take a wagon ride, play games, do arts and crafts, and run around the grounds.



Space is limited. You must RSVP. Event will happen rain or shine.

To RSVP contact Tiffany (360)632-7539 call/text
email: t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov

Follow us on Facebook to keep up to date.

<https://www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent>

**"A diagnosis
can't predict
the extraordinary
love you will
have for your
child."**

Tara McCallan

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Want to know more about
Parent to Parent? Check out
our website and Facebook
page.

[https://
www.islandcountywa.gov/
Humanservices/Pages/Parent-
to-Parent.aspx](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx)
[Various Resource Guides](#)

[https://www.facebook.com/
islandcountyparent2parent](https://www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent)

(360)632-7539 Call/Text

Summer and Sensory Processing Issues

For many kids, **summer vacation** holds the promise of months of school-free fun. But for children with **sensory processing issues**, summer can be a challenging time.

From the sand on the beach to the fireworks on the Fourth of July, the season is full of exciting but potentially difficult experiences. An unfamiliar playground, a visit to an amusement park, a messy ice cream cone: all involve sensory surprises that can be overwhelming or upsetting if a child is unusually sensitive to light, noise, and tactile sensations. But with some preparation and planning parents can help kids with sensory issues get the most out of summertime.

Study your child's specific needs

The first step to helping a child with sensory processing issues enjoy summertime is having a strong understanding her specific needs. Sensory processing issues come in many shapes and sizes, and no two kids are exactly the same. An activity like going to the beach might be a huge treat for one child and miserable for another, depending on their individual sensitivities.



"For children with tactile hypersensitivity something like going to the beach can be a nightmare," says Lindsey Biel, an occupational therapist and author of *Sensory Processing Challenges: Effective Clinical Work with Kids & Teens*. "They can't

stand the way the sun feels on their skin, or the sand on their feet."

The best way to avoid a **meltdown** at the beach is to tune into what your child's behavior tells you. Did she refuse to go in the water at the waterpark last summer? Does she have trouble with sticky food like cotton candy? Does she run away when you try to put sunscreen on her? Looking back at what kinds of activities your child has enjoyed—and which have lead to meltdowns—is a great way to get a sense of what she'll enjoy in the future, and what tools you can use to help potentially difficult activities become less stressful.

Make a schedule and stick to it

When the school year ends, saying goodbye to homework is often cause for celebration, but for kids with sensory issues the **loss of an orderly schedule can spell disaster**.



"One of the difficult things that happens during summer is the loss of structure," says Biel. "Kids with sensory issues thrive when there's a **predictable schedule** and they can more or less tell what's going to happen each day. When that's gone the day becomes more stressful, not less."

Unexpected events are jarring and disruptive for kids with sensory issues who are more sensitive to changes in environment or activity. Routine helps them feel comfortable and better prepared to handle what's coming their way.

Once you've made a schedule, try hard to stick with it. Disorder is very confusing for kids with sensory issues, so consistency is key.

Avoid surprises by thinking ahead

Summer is a great time to try new things but some experiences can be overwhelming for kids with sensory issues. When it comes to going out, careful planning can mean the difference between a happy summer day and a total meltdown. The more prepared they are the less likely they are to be overwhelmed, which means everyone will have a better time.

- available, try doing an Internet search for sensory-friendly activities in your area.

Finally, remember that the goal is to help kids have a great summer. Focus on having fun, learning new skills, and doing what's best for your kids and yourself.

HERE ARE SOME VIRTUAL WAYS TO GET THE BODY MOVING THIS SUMMER

- Spirit Club - Join ARC of King County every Friday at 2pm for SPIRIT-CLUB, a FREE virtual exercise experience for people of all abilities!
 - *Multiple Trainers - follow the one that's right for you!
 - *No equipment needed!
 - *A fantastic workout for the whole family!
 - *For questions: twarren@arcofkingcounty.org
 - To join a class: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84704346106>
- Seattle Children's 35 ways to move your body this summer <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/development/35-ways-to-move-your-body-this-summer/>



Summer tools to know

The right tools and clothes can reduce sensory overload and help kids have a good time.

- **Sunglasses:** “Make sure the child has really high quality sunglasses,” says Biel, “A lot of kids with sensory issues are very sensitive to bright light.” A neoprene strap to help them stay on can be helpful.
- **Sun-protective hats:** For kids who are very sensitive to sun try a soft, comfortable wide-brimmed hat.
- **Good bug spray:** When it comes to mosquitos and ticks, comfort and safety are important. Many bug sprays are very effective but kids might resist them because they feel sticky or are strong-smelling. Lightweight long pants and long sleeves can be equally effective. You can also try spraying his clothing and hair rather than applying it directly to bare skin.
- **Sunscreen:** If you're spending time outside, sunscreen can be an essential. There are many different kinds, so investigate which works best for your child. Some are less greasy or come unscented or in spray versions. When applying sunscreen use massaging, even strokes. “Deep pressure is calming and organizing for kids,” says Biel. “Instead of using light touch to apply sunblock, use that as an opportunity for a massage. It can be a good way to help desensitize a child before going out.
- **The right bathing suit:** “There are different bathing suits that have different sensory qualities to them,” says Biel. “A lot of kids can't stand an elastic waistband, or the light touch of ruffles.” Finding a sensory-friendly suit will make going to the pool and other swimming activities much more fun for kids.
- **Ear protection:** Bring noise-cancelling earmuffs. Reducing noise takes intensity out of multisensory experiences. This is especially helpful for kids who are very sensitive to sound, but can be a great way for any child to take a step back and regroup.
- **Portable shelter:** Beaches and parks can be fun but it's important for kids to have a retreat. An umbrella or beach cabana provides protection from the sun and gives kids a safe space to take a break during outdoor activities.
- **Protective shoes:** If walking on grass or sand is intensely uncomfortable, don't push kids to go barefoot. Bring along a pair of aqua socks or other comfortable shoes that work well in outdoor conditions.

Seek out sensory-friendly

events: Many museums, movie theaters, and shows including circuses and major musicals offer summer events geared towards kids with sensory processing issues. To get a sense of what's

** Information provided by Child Mind Institute

Fun Summer Ideas In Your Own Backyard

Of course our islands are beautiful and full of activities for the whole family. That is why many of us moved here and many tourists travel far and wide to visit our beautiful scenery. Here are some ideas you may not know. Whidbey and Camano Islands have many great outdoor activities for the whole family.

- Price Sculpture Park - Wander in Wonder at the Sculpture Park in Coupeville <https://sculptureforest.org/>
- Coupeville Warf - One of most photographed images on Whidbey, restaurant, shopping, marina, etc.
- Saratoga Wood Trails System in Langley - Trails for Equestrians, Bikes, and Hikers, Parking Lot, Picnic Area, Porta Potty (in season), 120 acres with a 5.3 mile trail
- Ebey's Landing Trail - 5.2 acres trail in Coupeville with spectacular views. The trail is primarily used for hiking, walking, and nature trips and is accessible year-round
- Lakes and beaches to check out on Whidbey and Camano -
 - Deer Lake (Clinton)
 - Lone Lake (Langley)
 - Monroe Landing (North Penn Cove)
 - Windjammer Lagoon (Oak Harbor)
 - Lost Lake (Camano Island)
 - Goss Lake (Langley)
 - Freeland Park (Freeland)
 - Windjammer Park (Oak Harbor)
 - Cranberry Lake (Deception Pass State Park)
 - Cavalero Lagoon (Camano Island)



Island Transit offers Walks with Wheels.

The free bus can take you to several different locations for a walk, a hike, park areas, etc.

There is also a great website Rolling Washington that lists

many different areas that are mobility and stroller friendly with fun destinations.

ACCESSIBLE PARKS & TRAILS— Walks With Wheels with Island Transit

NORTH WHIDBEY:

Fort Casey State Park This park is the home of both an 1890's Coast Artillery Fort and a 1901 Lighthouse. Route information: The bus stops at the base of a steep hill at the park entrance. Enter the park and take the gravel road behind the offices to get close to the gun emplacements. Route 6 Mon-Fri. and Route 1 on Sat.

Kettles-Rhododendron Bike Path 2 miles of paved trail with views of Ebey's Prairie and the water and mountains to the west. Route information: Enter from S. Main Street in Coupeville. Route 1 Mon-Sat. or Route 6 Mon-Fri.

Rhododendron Park Located in Coupeville has a paved road through the middle called Rhody Road. Restrooms and picnic shelters are at the far end of the park. Route information: Route 1 SB – exit at Jacobs Road. Take the bike path to the park just to the east. Route 1 or 6 NB may access the park from S. Main Street using the Rhododendron bike path for 1.7 miles.

Hastie Lake Beach Park This is a great place to watch a sunset. Route information: The Route 6 bus stops Mon-Fri. at the paved parking lot. A sturdy bench sits just above the beach. Dress for sun and wind.

Oak Harbor's Waterfront Trail This trail hugs the harbor for over a mile with a gravel trail on the west end through Freund Marsh and a paved trail through Windjammer Park. Play-

grounds, a story walk, picnic tables, benches, and restrooms can be found along the way. Route information: Flintstone Park on the east end is just across Bayshore Drive from Harbor Station, the main bus terminal on North Whidbey. Take Routes 1, 3, 411W, 6 or 14 to reach Harbor Station and cross the street.

SOUTH WHIDBEY:

Clinton Beach Park Located next to the ferry, this park offers ADA restrooms, parking, and a picnic shelter. In the summer there is a blue mat that provides access over the sand for those with mobility issues. Route information: Take Route 1, 58 or 60 to the Clinton Ferry. (The park is across the street.)

South Whidbey Community Park Located just behind the High School with miles of well-groomed trails; hard packed gravel and dirt surfaces. Route information: Take Route 60 to the short road leading to the park.

Trustland Trails This location offers an ADA Loop on well packed gravel trails through a lovely forest. Route information: Take Route 1 or 60 southbound from Bayview and get off at Craw Road. The park entrance is 100 yards away.

Freeland Trail to Freeland County Park Route information: Take Route 1 SB to the Freeland Park & Ride. Take the paved bike path east to cross Hwy 525 at the light and then turn left on Myrtle Ave. Or take Route 1 NB to Payless, and turn right on Myrtle Ave. Take the paved trail down to the park on the beach with a dock, playground, and picnic shelter.

South Whidbey State Park Famous for its old growth forest, this park offers an old campground with paved roads that are closed to vehicles but accessible to those with mobility challenges. Route information: Enter to the left of the restrooms. Take Route 1 on Smuggler's Cove Road Mon -Fri.

Another resource for ADA (wheelchair accessible) trails in WA State Rolling Washington
<https://rollingwashington.org/>

Did you hear? Island County now has an [Autism Resource Website](https://www.pilotace.org/)
Autism Resources for Families/ Recursos para el autismo para familias

<https://www.pilotace.org/>

Topics include:

Have a Concern? Need a Screening? Need Resources? Need Support?



Many answers included such as:

What is a Developmental Screenings? A screening tool identifies a child who is at risk for a diagnosis of autism. A positive screening does not mean your child is autistic.

What is the Evaluation Process? If the screening tool identifies an area of concern, a formal developmental evaluation may be needed

**Website provided by Autism Partnership of Island County (APIC), Pediatric Associates of Whidbey Island, Toddler Learning Center (TLC) and Island County Parent to Parent

** Website includes Parent to Parent Disability Resource Guide, Autism Resource Guide and Behavioral Health Resource Guide under resources. Parent to Parent is here for support and more.



2021 Island County Transition & Resource Fair! Wednesday, October 13th Coupeville High School

It is never too early to start planning for the future. More details to follow.

2021 Island County {Virtual} Transition & Resource Fair!

Did you miss the 2021 Spring Island County Transition and Resource Fair? Or want to watch it again? Great news, it was recorded. Lots of great topics for any age.

Recorded on Wednesday, April 14th <https://www.ohsd.net/Page/8746>

Virtually explore services in our community in the areas of Developmental Disabilities (DDA) eligibility, Social Security (SSI and SSDI), Advocacy, Guardianship options, Employment Services & Support, Able Savings Accounts and more!



Accessible and Inclusive Communities Committee of Island County

Who we are: A sub-committee operating under the Governor's Committee on Disabilities tasked with helping our communities be more welcoming and inclusive for persons with disabilities. We're seeking self-advocates, family members, providers and community members to join our committee.



Our mission: To identify barriers that people with disabilities, or at risk, experience while living or visiting Camano and Whidbey Islands. Funds are available upon approval of project through the Governor's Committee. We would love to hear your experiences and suggestions for future projects that would benefit our communities. See <https://accessiblecommunities.wa.gov/>

When we meet: 3rd Wednesday of the month via Zoom 1:00-2:00pm

Contact: Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson, Island County Parent to Parent Coordinator
t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov or call/text (360)632-7539.

Examples of projects already approved and completed:

Island Transit Bus Stop Seats—making travel on the island more accessible to those that cannot stand for long periods of time or need a resting seat while waiting for their bus to arrive.

Island County Behavioral Health Resource Guide—A comprehensive list of resources for behavioral health services and support in Island County and beyond.

****Newly approved** Langley Accessible Sidewalk at SeaWall Park.** This sidewalk will give people with mobility issues access to a lookout point near “Hope” the Wishing Whale.

Coffee & Conversations

Casual **Virtual** gatherings offered Daytime - 11am-Noon and Nighttime on the **2nd Wednesday of the month**. 6:30-7:30pm. Call/text/email Tiffany with questions and to receive the Zoom link for the meetings.
t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov

PAMI Padres Apoyando Motivando Informando

Grupo de apoyo en Español para familias de niños con necesidades especiales. **Primer Martes** de cada mes.
Laiza (787)529-6788

Whidbey Functioning Autism Social Group

We are an informal group that provides support, information and social fun for individuals on the Autism Spectrum. Contact Todd Brehmer fineart@whidbey.net

People First Adults with disabilities that want to meet others with disabilities, build friendships, and promote inclusion in their community. Contact Call/text for more info (360)720-4918.

Heritage Adventurers

A friendship group for 18 and over on Whidbey Island meets for outings and events Sue Andrew at (360)321-5748

Flying Fingers Deaf and Hard of Hearing Social. Contact Susan for more details. (360)221-0383

Island County Parent to Parent

Support & Resources for People with Disabilities in Island County

Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson, Coordinator
(360)632-7539 call/text

t.wheeler-

thompson@islandcountwa.gov



****Check our Facebook page for up-to-date resources, information and activities**
www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent

**** We are now on Instagram too!**
https://www.instagram.com/parent_2_parent_island/

We have resource guides on our website:

- *Island County Parent to Parent Disability Resource Guide
- *Parent to Parent Autism Resource Guide
- *Island County Behavioral Health Resource Guide.

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx>